

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Jim Costa (D-Fresno) announced today that \$400,000 in federal funding was secured for State Route 198 Expressway in Kings County in the Fiscal Year 2008 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill. The bill will be passed on the House floor Tuesday night by a vote of 268 to 153.

Following this week's passage on the House floor, the bill will head into a Conference Committee where the House and Senate will resolve the differences between their versions. Following conference, the bills will again be sent to the House and Senate for final approval, after which they will be sent to the President for his signature.

"This is great news for Kings County," said Costa. "Route 198 is in need of these funds to widen the route into four lanes not only for the safety of commuters, but to help ease traffic for residents in Kings County. I am very pleased I could help Kings County out with this earmark."

The proposed project would widen State Route 198 to a four lane expressway, meeting current day safety standards. The project is rated as the highest priority in the State of California's Regional Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The project also will provide a utility easement outside of the state right-of-way, thus providing safer access for utility maintenance vehicles and reducing potential conflicts with commuters. Overall, the increased capacity of State Route 198 is estimated to save 320,000 vehicle-hours of delay annually.